

Applicant : Kevin J. Dewey et al.
For : FOOD CONTAINER SEALING APPARATUS
Page : 2

In the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-46. (canceled)

47. (new) An apparatus for sealing food containers using a sealing film, the apparatus comprising:

a base;

a container holder for holding a food container, the container holder is configured to be moved relative to the base between a loading position and a sealing position;

a heater platen positioned within the base;

a handle rotatably attached to the base to rotate between a loading position and a sealing position, the handle having a cam within the base; and

a pressure applicator positioned between a portion of the cam and a surface of the heater platen whereby, as the handle is rotated, the cam rotates and presses against the pressure applicator, which, in turn, applies pressure to the heater platen causing the heater platen to move into engagement with the sealing film to thereby seal the sealing film to portions of the food container when the container holder is in the sealing position.

48. (new) The apparatus of claim 47, wherein:

the pressure applicator applies pressure to a central portion of the heater platen.

49. (new) The apparatus of claim 48, wherein;

the pressure applicator includes at least one spring applying resilient pressure to the heater platen.

50. (new) The apparatus of claim 47, further comprising:

a bracket mounted on the heater platen for extending over the cam;

Applicant : Kevin J. Dewey et al.
For : FOOD CONTAINER SEALING APPARATUS
Page : 3

wherein as the handle is rotated to the loading position, the cam engages the bracket to thereby lift the heater platen from the sealed food container.

51. (new) The apparatus of claim 47, wherein:

the handle comprises a pair of side arms each having a base end and a distal end, the handle further comprising a handle member extending between the distal ends of the side arms, the base ends of the side arms being held to the base by a pair of pins aligned on a common axis such that the handle may be rotated about the common axis.

52. (new) The apparatus of claim 51, wherein:

the cam is positioned between the base ends of the side arms.

53. (new) The apparatus of claim 52, wherein:

the cam is a cylinder having a central axis, and wherein the cam is mounted between the base ends of the side arms such that the central axis of the cylinder is parallel to, but not coaxial with, the common axis whereby the cylinder is rotated about the common axis as the handle is rotated.

54. (new) The apparatus of claim 52, wherein:

the cam has an eccentric cross section.

55. (new) The apparatus of claim 47, wherein:

the base comprises two substantially vertical side panels, wherein the cam is mounted between the side panels.

56. (new) The apparatus of claim 55, further comprising:

a pair of guides extending vertically from opposite sides of the heater platen, the side panels of the base each have elongated opposing grooves on inner surfaces thereof, the

Applicant : Kevin J. Dewey et al.
For : FOOD CONTAINER SEALING APPARATUS
Page : 4

opposing grooves extending substantially vertically to receive the guides such that the guides and the heater platen are vertically slidable within the base.

57. (new) The apparatus of claim 55, wherein:

the side panels each have elongated opposing grooves on inner surfaces thereof, the opposing grooves extending substantially horizontally and opening to a front of the base to receive side edges of the container holder such that the container holder is horizontally slidable within the base.

58. (new) The apparatus of claim 57, wherein:

the opposing grooves are U-shaped with one leg of each groove opening to a front of the base to allow the container holder to be slid therein, with the container holder dropping to the other leg of each groove when the container holder is fully inserted into the base.

59. (new) The apparatus of claim 57, further comprising:

a pair of guides extending vertically from opposite sides of the heater platen, the side panels of the base each having elongated opposing grooves on inner surfaces thereof, the opposing grooves extending substantially vertically to receive the guides such that the guides and the heater platen are vertically movable within the base above the container holder.

60. (new) The apparatus of claim 47, wherein:

the heater platen comprises a metal plate and a heater blanket provided on an upper surface of the metal plate.

61. (new) The apparatus of claim 47, wherein:

the container holder comprises a metal sheet having top and bottom surfaces and at least one opening through the metal sheet circumscribed by an inner edge extending between the top and bottom surfaces, the container holder further comprising a resilient gasket having a thickness greater than that of the metal sheet and having a groove formed therein for receiving

Applicant : Kevin J. Dewey et al.
For : FOOD CONTAINER SEALING APPARATUS
Page : 5

the inner edge so as to contact both the top and bottom surfaces of the metal sheet and to line the opening to provide a upper support surface above the top surface of the metal sheet upon which portions of the food container are supported, the supported portions of the food container corresponding to locations where the sealing film is to be sealed to the food container.

62. (new) The apparatus of claim 47, wherein:

the container holder comprises a sheet having top and bottom surfaces and at least one opening through the sheet.

63. (new) The apparatus of claim 62, wherein:

the container holder includes legs extending from the sheet to support the container holder on a surface.

64. (new) The apparatus of claim 47, wherein:

the container holder includes a curved section configured to hold a roll of the sealing film such that a portion of the sealing film may be unrolled and pulled over the food container.

65. (new) The apparatus of claim 64, wherein:

the container holder includes a hold down for holding down an end of the sealing film, the hold down being located adjacent a step such that the end of the sealing film is flipped upward against the hold down and the step.

66. (new) The apparatus of claim 47, further comprising:

a cutting blade mounted to the heater platen for cutting the sealing film when the heater platen engages the sealing film.

67. (new) The apparatus of claim 47, further comprising:

a cutting blade mounted to the container holder for cutting the sealing film.

Applicant : Kevin J. Dewey et al.
For : FOOD CONTAINER SEALING APPARATUS
Page : 6

68. (new) The apparatus of claim 67, wherein:

the cutting blade is slidable in two directions along the container holder and configured to cut the sealing film as the cutting blade is slid in each direction.

69. (new) An apparatus for sealing food containers using a sealing film, the apparatus comprising:

a base;

a container holder for holding a food container, the container holder is configured to hold a roll of the sealing film such that a portion of the sealing film may be unrolled and pulled over the food container;

a heater platen positioned within the base; and

a pressure applicator positioned on a surface of the heater platen wherein the pressure applicator applies pressure to the heater platen causing the heater platen to move into engagement with the sealing film to thereby seal the sealing film to portions of the food container.

70. (new) The apparatus of claim 69, wherein:

the container holder comprises a metal sheet having top and bottom surfaces and at least one opening through the metal sheet circumscribed by an inner edge extending between the top and bottom surfaces, the container holder further comprising a resilient gasket having a thickness greater than that of the metal sheet and having a groove formed therein for receiving the inner edge so as to contact both the top and bottom surfaces of the metal sheet and to line the opening to provide a upper support surface above the top surface of the metal sheet upon which portions of the food container are supported, the supported portions of the food container corresponding to locations where the sealing film is to be sealed to the food container.

Applicant : Kevin J. Dewey et al.
For : FOOD CONTAINER SEALING APPARATUS
Page : 7

71. (new) The apparatus of claim 69, wherein:

the container holder comprises a sheet having top and bottom surfaces and at least one opening through the sheet.

72. (new) The apparatus of claim 71, wherein:

the container holder includes legs extending from the sheet to support the container holder on a surface.

73. (new) The apparatus of claim 69, wherein:

the container holder includes a curved section configured to hold a roll of the sealing film such that a portion of the sealing film may be unrolled and pulled over the food container.

74. (new) The apparatus of claim 73, wherein:

the container holder includes a hold down for holding down an end of the sealing film, the hold down being located adjacent a step such that the end of the sealing film is flipped upward against the hold down and the step.

75. (new) The apparatus of claim 69, further comprising:

a cutting blade mounted to the container holder for cutting the sealing film.

76. (new) The apparatus of claim 75, wherein:

the cutting blade is slidable in two directions along the container holder and configured to cut the sealing film as the cutting blade is slid in each direction.

77. (new) The apparatus of claim 69, further comprising:

a handle attached to the base to move between a loading position and a sealing position, wherein, as the handle is moved, the handle causes the pressure applicator to apply pressure to the heater platen.

Applicant : Kevin J. Dewey et al.
For : FOOD CONTAINER SEALING APPARATUS
Page : 8

78. (new) The apparatus of claim 77, wherein:

the handle includes a cam within the base; and

the pressure applicator is positioned between a portion of the cam and a surface of the heater platen whereby, as the handle is rotated, the cam rotates and presses against the pressure applicator, which, in turn, applies pressure to the heater platen causing the heater platen to move into engagement with the sealing film to thereby seal the sealing film to portions of the food container when the container holder is in the sealing position.

79. (new) An apparatus for sealing food containers using a sealing film, the apparatus comprising:

a base;

a container holder for holding a food container;

a heater platen positioned within the base;

a pressure applicator positioned on a surface of the heater platen, wherein the pressure applicator applies pressure to the heater platen causing the heater platen to move into engagement with the sealing film to thereby seal the sealing film to portions of the food container; and

a cutting blade mounted in front of the heater platen for cutting the sealing film.

80. (new) The apparatus of claim 79, wherein:

the heater platen comprises a metal plate and a heater blanket provided on an upper surface of the metal plate.

81. (new) The apparatus of claim 79, wherein:

the container holder comprises a sheet having top and bottom surfaces and at least one opening through the sheet.

Applicant : Kevin J. Dewey et al.
For : FOOD CONTAINER SEALING APPARATUS
Page : 9

82. (new) The apparatus of claim 81, wherein:

the container holder includes legs extending from the sheet to support the container holder on a surface.

83. (new) The apparatus of claim 79, wherein:

the container holder includes a curved section configured to hold a roll of the sealing film such that a portion of the sealing film may be unrolled and pulled over the food container.

84. (new) The apparatus of claim 83, wherein:

the container holder includes a hold down for holding down an end of the sealing film, the hold down being located adjacent a step such that the end of the sealing film is flipped upward against the hold down and the step.

85. (new) The apparatus of claim 79, wherein:

the cutting blade is slidable in two directions along the container holder and configured to cut the sealing film as the cutting blade is slid in each direction.

86. (new) An apparatus for sealing food containers using a sealing film, the apparatus comprising:

a base;

a container holder for holding a food container, the container holder is configured to be moved relative to the base between a loading position and a sealing position;

a heater platen positioned within the base;

a pressure applicator positioned on the heater platen wherein the pressure applicator applies pressure to the heater platen causing the heater platen to move into engagement with the sealing film to thereby seal the sealing film to portions of the food container when the container holder is in the sealing position, wherein the pressure applicator includes a resilient member for applying resilient pressure to the heater platen.

Applicant : Kevin J. Dewey et al.
For : FOOD CONTAINER SEALING APPARATUS
Page : 10

87. (new) The apparatus of claim 86, wherein:

the heater platen comprises a metal plate and a heater blanket provided on an upper surface of the metal plate.

88. (new) The apparatus of claim 86, further comprising:

a cutting blade mounted to the container holder for cutting the sealing film.

89. (new) The apparatus of claim 88, wherein:

the cutting blade is slidable in two directions along the container holder and configured to cut the sealing film as the cutting blade is slid in each direction.

90. (new) The apparatus of claim 86, wherein:

the resilient member is at least one spring.

91. (new) An apparatus for sealing food containers using a sealing film, the apparatus comprising:

a base comprising a front panel, a rear panel, and two opposing substantially vertical side panels extending between the front panel and the rear panel;

a container holder for holding a food container, the container holder is configured to be moved relative to the base between a loading position and a sealing position, the container holder having a pair of side edges;

a heater platen positioned within the base;

a pair of guides extending vertically from opposite sides of the heater platen;

a handle movably attached to the base to move between a loading position and a sealing position; and

a pressure applicator positioned on a surface of the heater platen whereby as the handle is moved, the handle causes the pressure applicator to apply pressure to a central portion of the heater platen causing the heater platen to move into engagement with the sealing film to thereby seal the sealing film to portions of the food container when the container holder is in the sealing position,

wherein the side panels of the base each having elongated opposing first grooves on inner surfaces thereof, the first grooves extending substantially horizontally and opening to a front of the base to receive the side edges of the container holder such that the container holder is horizontally slidable within the base, the side panels of the base each also having elongated opposing second grooves on inner surfaces thereof, the second grooves extending substantially vertically to receive the guides such that the guides and the heater platen are vertically movable within the base above the container holder.

92. (new) The apparatus of claim 91, further comprising:
a bracket mounted on the heater platen for extending over the cam;
wherein as the handle is rotated to the loading position, the cam engages the bracket to thereby lift the heater platen from the sealed food container.

93. (new) The apparatus of claim 91, wherein:
the container holder comprises a sheet having top and bottom surfaces and at least one opening through the sheet.

94. (new) The apparatus of claim 93, wherein:
the container holder includes legs extending from the sheet to support the container holder on a surface.

95. (new) The apparatus of claim 91, wherein:
the container holder includes a curved section configured to hold a roll of the sealing film such that a portion of the sealing film may be unrolled and pulled over the food container.

96. (new) The apparatus of claim 95, wherein:
the container holder includes a hold down for holding down an end of the sealing firm, the hold down being located adjacent a step such that the end of the sealing film is flipped upward against the hold down and the step.

Applicant : Kevin J. Dewey et al.
For : FOOD CONTAINER SEALING APPARATUS
Page : 12

97. (new) The apparatus of claim 91, wherein:

the heater platen comprises a metal plate and a heater blanket provided on an upper surface of the metal plate.

98. (new) The apparatus of claim 91, further comprising:

a cutting blade mounted to the heater platen for cutting the sealing film when the heater platen engages the sealing film.

99. (new) The apparatus of claim 91, further comprising:

a cutting blade mounted to the container holder for cutting the sealing film.

100. (new) The apparatus of claim 99, wherein:

the cutting blade is slidable in two directions along the container holder and configured to cut the sealing film as the cutting blade is slid in each direction.

101. (new) The apparatus of claim 91, wherein;

the pressure applicator includes at least one spring applying resilient pressure to the heater platen.

102. (new) A container holder for an apparatus for sealing food containers using a sealing film, the container holder comprising:

a plate having at least one opening therethrough, the plate being configured to support a food container thereon whereby pockets in the food container are accepted within the at least one opening;

legs extending downwardly from the plate for supporting the plate above a surface;

a film holder associated with the plate to hold a roll of the sealing film such that a portion of the sealing film may be unrolled and pulled over the food container placed on the plate; and

a cutting device connected to the plate for cutting the sealing film.

Applicant : Kevin J. Dewey et al.
For : FOOD CONTAINER SEALING APPARATUS
Page : 13

103. (new) The apparatus of claim 102, wherein:

the cutting device is slidable in two directions and configured to cut the sealing film as the cutting blade is slid in each direction.

104. (new) The apparatus of claim 102, further including:

a hold down for holding down an end of the sealing film, the hold down being located adjacent a step such that the end of the sealing film is flipped upward against the hold down and the step.